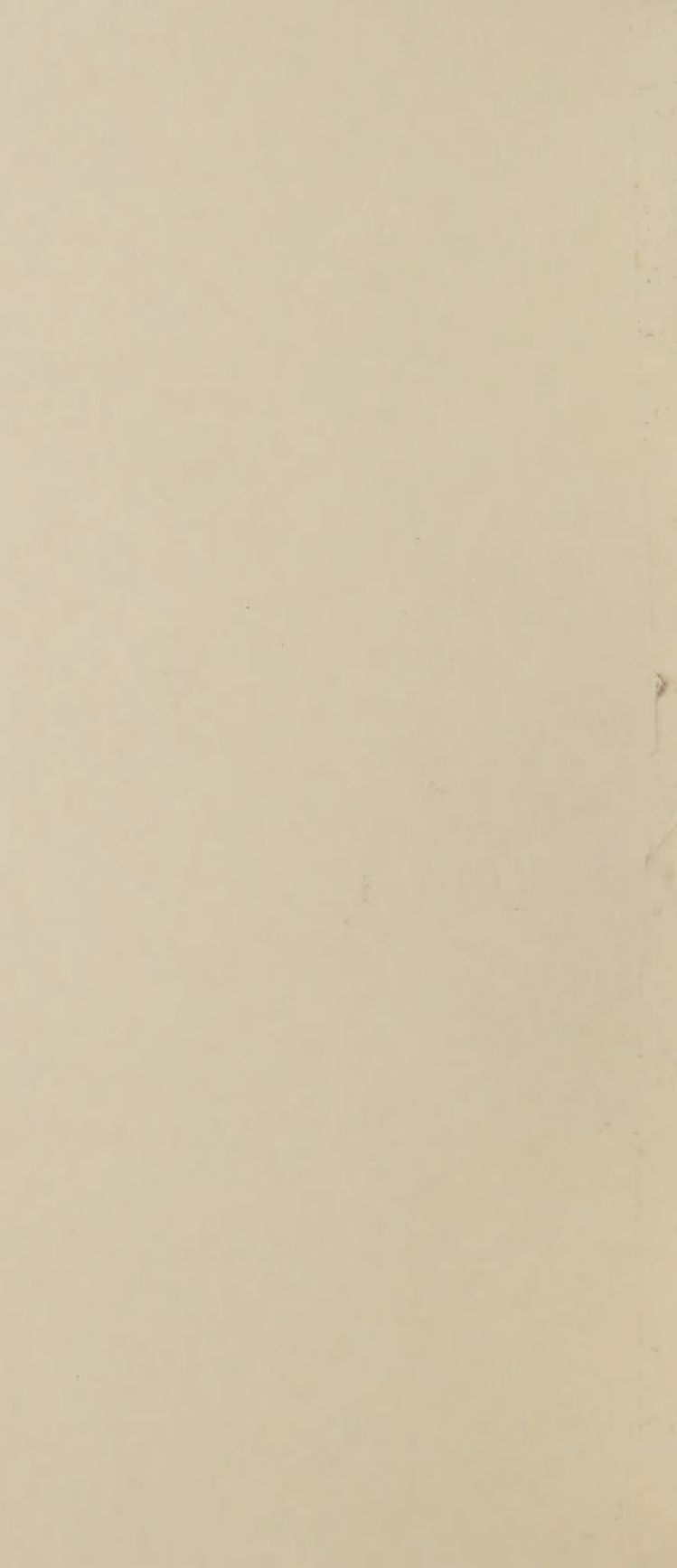


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NSIVE ROTATIONAL GRAZING-- GETTING STARTED



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PREPARED BY
Soil
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Harrisburg,
Pennsylvania

Concept of Intensive Rotational Grazing

An intensive rotational grazing system is good pasture management. With this system, you divide your pasture into paddocks, or separate pastures. Livestock graze one paddock for no more than five days. The livestock are then moved to another paddock and the grazed paddock is allowed to regrow.

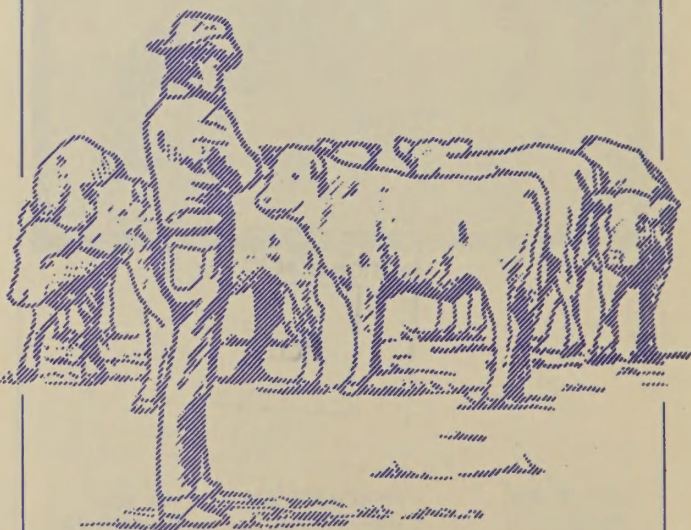
Benefits for you and your livestock

Farmers have -

- ★ low initial investment
- ★ low animal maintenance costs
- ★ reduced feed costs
- ★ reduced need for stored forage

Livestock can -

- * harvest their own food
- * spread their own manure
- * stay cleaner and healthier
- * thrive outdoors



Components of an Intensive Grazing System

Grasses and Legumes -

The pasture is made up of a variety of grasses and legumes. Most are cool season but some are warm season and can stand the hot weather of midsummer. Each specie has its own characteristics, assets and shortcomings. Learn about *your* grasses and legumes.

Animals -

Intensive grazing is designed for ruminants which use large amounts of forage, such as cattle, sheep and goats. But intensive grazing also can be used with other animals that graze or eat forage, such as horses and swine.

Fencing -

Become familiar with fencing materials and supplies. Match the materials to the job.

Water -

Water is one of the most essential items in an animal's diet. Lush pasture contains a high percentage of water, sometimes enough to take care of livestock needs. But in most cases more water will be needed. Have water in each paddock if you can, otherwise place the water supply in the alley or a common area.

Shade -

Usually shade is not needed, but on extremely hot days the animals should have access to shade. The shaded area can be a wood lot, a well-ventilated shed or barn, or a portable shade that can be moved to the grazing area.

These are some of the components that must be managed properly for a successful harvesting-feeding system.

You can make improvements to your system as you learn what works best for you.

How to get started

Evaluate your existing resources to see whether they can contribute to starting an intensive grazing system. Try to use them as efficiently as possible. It may cost you very little to get started.

Test the soil for fertility. Proper amounts of fertilizer and lime must be present for a lush pasture.

Plan your system on paper. Get help from Soil Conservation Service, your conservation district or Cooperative Extension.

Use what pasture you have to get started. You may not need to reseed.

Determine the size of your paddocks, and average length of rotation. Decide how many paddocks you will need. Making paddocks as square as possible will use less fencing and have more uniform grazing with better animal distribution. Design the paddocks so there is enough room to move equipment and livestock about easily.

Allow grass to grow to between six and eight inches. Graze the paddock with the tallest grass first. Remove livestock when forage is down to 1-1/2 inches.

Design your water supply to be as close to the livestock as possible.

Design the pasture-water-shade system so that manure does not accumulate in one spot. Aim toward even spreading.

Clip paddocks as needed to improve the stand and quality of your forage.

Use pasture to supplement a feeding system or as the primary feeding system.



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Help is Available

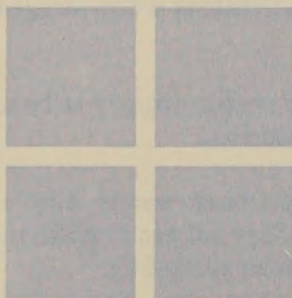
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS help landusers with natural resource problems. They can help you set up your grazing program. In certain counties the Chesapeake Bay Financial Assistance Program can provide funds for grazing system components through local conservation districts.

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE gives farmers free technical help on setting up their grazing programs.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE offers farmers information and education on crop, pasture and livestock management.

AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE offers cost-share funding to farmers for fencing for rotational grazing. Sometimes funding is also available for lime, fertilizer and seed for pastures and for installing spring developments or other types of watering systems.

FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION offers loans for farm operations, livestock purchases and conservation practice installation.



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